



# THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

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THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council)

President:

Mr. J. E. Veness,  
6 Lance Avenue,  
BLAKEHURST. 2221.

'Phone: 546 3932.

Hon. Treasurer:

Mrs. K. Johns,  
38 Princes Hwy,  
KOGARAH, 2217

'Phone: 587 4848

Hon. Secretary:

Mrs. E. Butters,  
36 Louisa Street,  
OATLEY, 2223.

'Phone 57 6954.

OBJECTIVES: To promote interest in the history of Kogarah Municipality and Australia in general.  
To give support to the preservation of historic buildings and other objects considered to be of historic value.

MEMBERSHIP: Any enquiries regarding membership should be directed to the Hon. Secretary. Visitors are especially welcome.

Subscriptions - Ordinary Members:	\$1.50	per annum.
Pensioners:	\$1.00	" "
Students:	\$1.00	" "

MEETINGS: Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 8 p.m., in the Exhibition Lounge, at the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah. (Take lift to second floor and turn to the right).

PARKING: Cars may be parked in the ground floor parking area, the entrance to which is in Wick's Lane, at the rear of the Civic Centre. Post Office Lane alongside the Civic Centre has one-way traffic and it is necessary to enter at Montgomery Street end. From that Lane you turn left into Wick's Lane and use the first entrance into the parking area. An alternative way is to enter Wick's Lane from Kensington Street. In such case, use the second entrance into parking area.

CROSS PARK MUSEUM: Open Sundays and Public Holidays from Noon to 5 p.m.  
Admission 20c Adults, 10c Children. (Maximum 60c for one family).

DONATIONS FOR MUSEUM: Donations of items of historical interest suitable for inclusion in the Society's Museum will be gratefully received by the Museum Convener:

Mrs. J. A. Lean,  
24 Victoria Ave.,  
PENSHURST, 2222

'Phone 57 5940.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEWSLETTER: Contributions of articles and information of local interest for publication in this Newsletter will be welcomed if forwarded to the Publications Officer:

Mr. V. S. Smith,  
26 Prince Edward Street,  
CARLTON, 2218.

'Phone 587 2938.

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VALE : ERIC DUNLOP.

Australian history lost a dedicated champion with the death of Mr. Eric Dunlop on 1st April.

Mr. Dunlop was perhaps best known as an authority on historical museums. For many years he was senior lecturer in history at Armidale Teachers' College, where he took the lead in establishing The Armidale Folk Museum and The Museum of Education. He broadened his expertise by visiting historical museums in Britain and Europe and later, in response to a mounting demand by regional groups, wrote the R.A.H.S. handbook, "Local Historical Museums in Australia". This publication was responsible for the founding of countless museums.

Eric Dunlop was also a painstaking worker in the field of local history. The scenes of his boyhood in suburban Croydon are treated in his admirable study, "Between Two Highways". His last essay, "Harvest of the Years", deals with the adjacent district, Burwood. Sadly, no signed copy exists. The first book off the press was placed in Mr. Dunlop's hands, but he was too weak to autograph it.

Following major surgery, from which he appeared to make a remarkable recovery, Mr. and Mrs. Dunlop retired to their holiday home at Blackheath. It came as a shock to his many friends to learn that his health was again deteriorating.

The widespread determination throughout Australia to preserve and display the relics of our history owes a considerable debt to Eric Dunlop.

Philip Geeves.

#### OUR NEXT MEETING.

The June meeting of our Society will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 13th June, in the Exhibition Lounge on the Second Floor of the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah. At this meeting we will be privileged to hear a Talk entitled "From Forest to Suburbia" by Mr. L. K. Stevens of the Hurstville Historical Society.

Here is a Talk about a district which is adjacent to our own, and with a very similar history. You'll enjoy it!

Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Greenaway are rostered for Supper Duty.

The Prize for the Raffle has been kindly donated by Mrs. M. Fordham.

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#### OUR BUSY TREASURER.

Mrs. G. Johns, our Hon. Treasurer, has been very busy with receipts from various sources. There was our Annandale Tour, two organised parties visiting the Museum on special days, consequent extra Museum Sales, and the rush of payments of the 1974 Subscriptions. Most Members have now paid their 1974 subscriptions and if YOU have not done so, and wish to retain your membership and receive the Newsletter, please let us have it not later than the June meeting.

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#### A Word from Mrs. S. Kelly.

On behalf of my family and myself I would like to express very sincere thanks to all my friends for the beautiful flowers, cards, letters and kind thoughts. I especially wish to thank our President, Mr. Jeff Veness, for the write-up which was so typical of Tom, who, even after seven years of major surgery, never once lost his wonderful and courageous smile. As the Rev. S. Langshaw said, he was indeed "A good man".

Sylvia Kelly.

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#### Death of Mrs. R. Schneider.

We record, with regret, the sudden passing of Mrs. R. Schneider, who was a member of our Society and the subject of an article by Dr. D. J. & Mrs. D. A. Hatton which appeared in our January 1974 Newsletter.

Mrs. Schneider very generously donated to our Society a painting by Elioth Gruner who, in 1910, lived next door to her. Our sincere sympathy is extended to the relatives and friends.

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#### MUSEUM REPORT.

There has been a good response to the Committee's request for more volunteer attendants at Carss' Cottage and many names have been added to the Roster. As we have said before, members undertaking this duty always express pleasure concerning their experience and look forward to their names appearing on the Roster again. More volunteers will be welcome.

Two public holidays in April contributed to an increase in entrance fees and sales and Day Book reports continue to reflect visitors' goodwill and compliments for the Society's efforts in maintaining our Museum and Art Centre.

Older people obviously enjoy reminiscing as they recognise familiar objects, but one little girl was heard to say "What a beaut. pencil sharpendr!" as she gazed admiringly at a meat mincer.



There have been a number of requests for Membership Application Forms and some of these enthusiastic visitors have already joined the Society. Addresses of early residents have been given and we hope members doing research will be able to interview some of these and gain further information.

The wall-cabinet mentioned in a previous report, has been installed and members of the Museum Committee have had a busy time arranging reference books, library, etc. in various groups. This cabinet is not on display to visitors but will be available to Members whenever the Museum is open. It will be a valuable asset as our collection of literature increases, year by year.

Mr. Veness had an eventful day recently, when he supervised the installation of the new cabinet and then opened the Museum to one of the largest groups of visitors we have had the pleasure of welcoming. These comprised about ninety visitors who were associated with the International Ikebana Conference which was held in Sydney. Many were overseas and inter-state delegates. Their donation to our funds was \$10 and sales were good.

In the Art Centre a new array of pottery has been received from the St. George Studio Potters' Group and sales for May have exceeded those for April. The new supply includes dried arrangements by Mrs. Muriel Lloyd and a variety of pots by Joan Hilton and Mai Hannan. We have been promised more paintings, and these will fill the spaces on the walls left by recent sales.

#### Museum Takings - April 1974.

Entrance fees:	\$52.20
Sale of Books:	3.40
Sale of Folders:	.30
Sale of Carss' Cottage Jams:	23.70
Commission on Pottery Sales:	.45
Commission on sale of Paintings:	5.25
	<u>\$85.30</u>

#### Museum Takings - May 1974.

Entrance fees:	\$47.30
Sale of Books:	1.35
Sale of Photos:	7.50
Sale of Carss' Cottage Jams:	2.35
Commission on Pottery Sales:	33.70
	<u>\$92.20</u>

#### Art Centre Sales, April & May.

Paintings by D. Paynter & F. Muir	35.00
Pottery Sales	23.00
	<u>\$63.00</u>

Amount paid to St. George Art Society	\$17.00
Amount paid to Mrs. F. Muir	12.75
Amount paid to St. George Studio Potters' Group	25.20

#### Museum Roster:

9th June	-	Mrs. D. Hatton & Mrs. M. Grieve
16th "	-	Mr. & Mrs. R. Holmes
17th "	-	Mr. & Mrs. V. Smith
23rd "	-	Mrs. K. Slater & Mr. K. Grieve
30th "	-	Mrs. J. James & Miss D. McLean
7th July	-	Mr. & Mrs. J. Lean
14th "	-	Mrs. S. McOnie & Miss M. Foley
21st "	-	Mr. & Mrs. E. Schweikert
28th "	-	Mrs. G. Johns & Mrs. G. Taylor

(If date shown is inconvenient, please phone me - 57-5940).

### Display Material.

Donations and loans of articles and materials for Museum displays are always appreciated and we now continue our list of recent acquisitions and express our thanks to the following kind people -

<u>Mr. R. J. Gough</u>	For photographs. Copies of early photographs of the Kinsella Family, etc.
<u>Mrs. B. Dodd</u>	Newspapers. Special Editions, 1935, 1936, 1938.
<u>Mrs. R. G. Diment</u>	Photograph, St. George Cricket Club.
<u>Mrs. W. Foster.</u>	A Jug. (see note following this report)
<u>Mr. B. Cohen</u>	Button Hook in metal holder.
<u>Miss G. Coxhead</u>	Books for Library - "Seeing History"; "Australia, Colonies to Commonwealth, 1850-1900"; The Journey of Burke & Wills" by Max Colwell.

Gwen Lean  
Museum Convener.

### This is the story of Mrs. Foster's gift:

In 1901, Mr. Foster's father-to-be (then aged about 21) was very desirous of marrying his mother-to-be, aged 17. But her parents considered him to be much too young and inexperienced to accept the responsibilities of marriage. At this point Anthony Horder's store was totally destroyed by fire, and such was the size of their reserve stock that they re-opened for business the very next day in the Exhibition Building then in Prince Alfred Park, with a big Sale.

So, to demonstrate his initiative and ability to handle this desperate situation, the intending bridegroom went to the Exhibition Building and purchased a 100-piece dinner service, a large afternoon-tea set and every article of crockery that could possibly be needed in a home. Including this jug!

This demonstration won the day and early in the new century, the marriage took place and Mr. Bill Foster was born so that he could be with us at this more convenient time, and be our Speaker at the September meeting. - Note your diary!

- V.S.S.

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### OUR SOCIAL NEWS.

Our afternoon tour of Annandale, (after a slight delay caused by our inability to find our guide, Mr. A. Roberts!) was most interesting. While waiting for him we had an inspection of the beautiful Hunter Baillie Presbyterian Church whose 132-feet high stone tower can be seen for many miles.

In the 100-feet wide Johnston Street we saw many interesting old homes - and the un-beautiful home-units which mark the spots where others have unfortunately been demolished. In Annandale and Glebe are many old homes and we saw them all.

Mr. Roberts certainly knew his subject and we are greatly indebted to him and the Annandale Society. When, at about 5 p.m., we turned towards home, I think everyone agreed that we had had a most enjoyable outing.

Once again we give a reminder about our STREET STALL which will be held in Belgrave Street, Kogarah on Friday, 19th July. Have you something saleable for this occasion? The amount of our profit will almost certainly depend only upon the size of our stock. And the size of our stock will depend on the generosity of our members! Please help to make this day a success.

Sylvia Kelly (Social Secretary).

### Tour of District by Bankstown Historical Society.

The Bureau of Meteorology will record Saturday May 25, as the day Sydney had one of its worst storms. But the day has an added meaning for the Society as it marks a visit to our district and Museum by the Bankstown Historical Society, a band of enthusiasts who must deserve the title "dedicated historians" for braving Saturday's fearful elements.

For this tour of the district we sought the co-operation of the St. George Historical Society, which was represented by Mr. Arthur Ellis and Mr. Don Sinclair. We started with an inspection of Lydham Hall which was built in 1855 by Joseph Davis, a butcher, who constructed the home on part of 67 acres which constituted a cattle grazing property. From there we proceeded to Tempe House, built in 1829 by Alexander Brodie Sparks, which is the oldest existing house south of Cook's River.

The main points of inspection for the Kogarah district were St. Paul's Church - 1869; Kogarah School - 1891; the School of Arts - 1886; the English homes; Ellesmere - 1882; St. Kilda c. 1830's and Carss' Cottage.

The afternoon was so successful that consideration is being given to the idea of arranging a guided tour of the district for any historical society or interested group.

Kogarah Municipality has an interesting history in the development of Sydney. It was a source of raw materials - lime, charcoal and wood for building; and later was important as a vegetable growing area. We can claim that a past Premier (Sir Joseph Carruthers) was a resident of our suburb and the history of our transport system is varied and colourful with trains, steam trams, trolley buses and manual and steam punts. Perhaps the most interesting point is the fact that we can trace our history back to 1770 when Captain Cook entered Botany Bay, and we believe he also came into Kogarah Bay.

Urban history can be just as exciting as that of our rural areas, for it reflects not just the story of our suburb but also the development of our city socially, politically, economically and demographically. Fortunately for Kogarah, the developer, in the name of progress, has not pulled down all our old buildings and an interesting tour could be organized.

The spirit of Bankstown Historical Society members is to be admired. Despite a blackout at the Museum, a fallen tree and power lines blocking the street at Carss' Park, drenching rain and biting winds they forged forward inspecting with great interest all points we visited. To them we must also extend our thanks for prompting the idea of arranging a guided tour of the district, an idea which I am sure will augur well for our society.

Colleen McEwen.

### CARSS' COTTAGE ON T.V.

On Wednesday, 29th May, we received a surprise telephone request from Warwick Ranken of Channel 10 that we receive him and a camera crew at Carss' Cottage and that our President, Mr. Jeff Veness, consent to be interviewed for T.V.

Mrs. Gwen Lean, Convener of the Museum Committee, together with Mrs. Butters and Mrs. Burghart sped to the Museum and in no time dusted, swept, polished and placed fresh flowers in position.

Warwick Ranken, a camera-man and his assistant arrived with camera, recorder, microphones, lights, stands, etc. and many were their appreciative remarks concerning the beautiful surroundings and Carss' Cottage and the high standard of our displays. Our members were impressed by the great care taken during the actual interview and later during the photography of outside and inside the Museum and of individual displays. As we go to press, it is anticipated that the T.V. viewing time will be immediately after the 6 p.m. news session on Channel 10 on Sunday, 2nd June. We hope that many members - and potential visitors - will see Carss' Cottage on T.V. --- V.S.S.

- Continued from the May Newsletter.

### DOWN ON THE FARM

Being Childhood Memories as related by

MONA SMITH

Fortunately, our family was a healthy one and sickness among us children was rare. One brother had a rather serious attack of croup, one pulled a saucepan of boiling water off the stove, scalding down one side and another was dragged from one of our dams more dead than alive - but when I remember all the potential dangers, such as horses, cows, dams, farm-machinery, guns - and trees to fall out of - I think we were very lucky.

But should we have unfortunately been ill, my mother was well prepared, for she possessed a book containing some remarkable remedies for the treatment of every disease known to mankind - and a few others besides. These scripts usually commenced with some very simple directions, which anyone could understand, such as "Take the brains of four sparrows..." or "Pound the bones of three small lizards...". The efficacy of medicine was judged by its horrible taste. As we were all so well, we were kept in that happy condition by standing in a row each Saturday morning and, with the same tablespoon, all given a dose of castor-oil from a big blue bottle.

On Wednesday mornings it was the custom to consider the state of our blood, which was kept in tip-top condition with a dose of treacle and sulphur. Actually, we were too frightened to get sick, for we had seen my mother thoughtfully looking at a vile mixture with which she had treated a sick cow. She carefully poured it into a big bottle and placed it on a high shelf in the kitchen. We suspected that it was being kept for our future use, so took no risks. We knew that my mother had a touch of arthritis, but obtained relief by rubbing her leg with the liniment she had obtained for a sick horse. The horse had died but it is nice to know that the liniment was not wasted.

Any open wound, noticed by my mother, despite the victim's desperate attempts to keep it out of sight, was effectively treated by pouring methylated spirits into the open cut. The patient never returned for further treatment and my mother was gratified to thus learn that she could effect a cure upon the first application.

I can remember my mother having only one medical failure and that was when, at the age of 84 years, by using her common sense, she worked out a method of burning a cataract off her own eye by bathing it with a weak solution of methylated spirits. Although she tried various strengths, she had no success so came to Sydney where Dr. Hertzberg removed the cataract by using an entirely different method. My mother grew quite fond of Dr. Hertzberg and gave him much advice - and a farewell kiss when she left. She could now see well again and for the first time in years could plainly see our second farm, eight miles away. But upon thinking matters over more clearly, it became apparent to her that her own treatment would most likely have been just as effective if she had only persisted with it. Much less expensive, too!

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In our house-paddock were two long clothes lines, fixed at one end to a walnut tree and extending to the laundry and dairy. The lines were kept up by clothes-props which had grown down the paddocks. At the side of the yard, shielded by sheets of iron, was a roaring fire on washing days, over which kerosene-tins of water were heated and, before the days of the laundry, were



poured into a large round tub which, on Saturday nights, served a different purpose. Eventually, long lines of washing fluttered in the breeze, having been scrubbed Persil-white by the use of our own recipe - Sunlight soap and elbow-grease.

Leaning against the laundry door would be a loaded rifle and my mother kept one eye on the large hawk which hovered overhead, circling on motionless wings, with both its eyes fixed on our chickens scratching around mother-hen. Mum was an excellent shot and I well remember her photograph on the front page of the Armidale Express with her arms fully outstretched, but not nearly wide enough to fully extend the wings of a large eagle she had shot. Hawks and eagles which flew over our farm did so at their own risk - and foxes which prowled around our securely wire-netted fowl-run were also in grave danger! Our fowls usually roosted at night in the fastened fowl-house, where they were safe, but turkeys were inclined to roam and several of ours had provided tasty suppers for the wily fox.

In addition to being unfavourably disposed to hawks and foxes, my mother took a dim view of snakes, which were plentiful in our area. One day a brother and I heard my mother loudly demanding an axe. My brother sped to the wood-pile and I hastened to investigate. She had found a large snake entering a hole under the house and had grabbed it about a foot from its head. Its remaining four feet were squirming around her arms and she was having difficulty in maintaining her grip. Eventually, my brother arrived and his wild blows cut it into wriggling sections.

Because of constant practice, my young brothers were also excellent shots. Each night one of them strapped an electric torch to his forehead and took his rifle down the paddocks. Soon a shot would ring out and the bright reflection of the torch-light in the eyes of a hare would cause it to become the target, and provide supper for our dog. Although hares were usually reserved for the dog, my mother would sometimes mince the choicest parts and make rissoles which were very popular with the family. In the torch-light search for a hare, the eyes of spiders also shone brilliantly and one not accustomed to hunting by this method would be surprised that the eyes of so small an insect could produce such a bright display.

Torches strapped to the boys' heads also added to their skill when catching eels. Wading up the Tilbuster Creek at night, the boys speared the eels as the bright light attracted them to the surface. These silvery creatures, skinned and cut into discs, were parboiled and fried in batter and provided many a tasty breakfast.

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On a bright Spring morning, soon after sunrise, it was quite a pleasure to walk down the paddocks to find the cows. Upon opening the back door, I was greeted by the dog, prancing around in anticipation of a walk and he would go chasing after low-flying swallows just for the fun of it. On the grass, near the hay shed, swarms of birds were searching for grain spilt by the horses and from a near-by tree magpies warbled their melodious songs and sometimes swooped down to snatch at my long hair and take a few strands for their nest. On a slight rise a short distance away, the sight of the dog usually sent a few rabbits scampering for the safety of a hollow log.

Passing through the top gate we went down a short lane between the emerald-green of a crop of young oats and a paddock where freshly-mown lucerne scented the air, and then past a giant aloe plant with its huge thick leaves from which my father had skilfully carved dolls for my sister and me and other toys for the

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boys. When we were young, these were the only toys we possessed. The early-morning sun glistened on the dew-drenched grass and drops, like diamonds, sparkled on the pink gum-tips. With black tails swaying merrily, white-breasted willy-wagtails perched on the backs of grazing horses, intently watching for insects and worms and giving their "sweet-pretty-creature" calls.

Overhead, across the azure sky, flew noisy pink-and-grey galahs and swarms of multi-coloured diamond-sparrows spread carpet-like over patches of seeding grasses. I must remember to tell the boys about a patch of mushrooms, which, during the night, have developed their smooth heads and are now spread over the short grass like inverted white saucers. Passing a briar bush I would peer into a bird's-nest to see if three speckled blue eggs I had been watching had yet hatched into young wide-mouthed birds, crying for their breakfast.

But this delightful walk was coming to an end, for the cows now saw me and were advancing up the hill. Usually I was deprived of this glorious walk, because on the sparkling sunny mornings the cows would invariably be up at the top gate waiting for me to open it. They then walked to the milking-shed in a dignified manner and the leader took up her position in the bail.

But what a difference there would be on a wet wintry morning, when the clock said the sun had risen but a quick look out the back door seemed to indicate that it was still midnight. The depressing sound of rain drumming on the iron roof and of water gurgling in the pipes leading to the rapidly-filling tanks, did nothing to kindle a desire to search for the cows and when, in a long black macintosh, and with a potato-bag over my head and shoulders, I ventured out into the blinding rain, calls and whistles would fail to bring the dog. After a few wangs on the kennel he would stagger out, bleary-eyed and unwilling. Of the usual view of Mount Duval there would be none and the wet sky seemed to meet the flooded earth in the next paddock.

There were, of course, variations in these winter mornings. Sometimes it was snowing and all the tracks and usual landmarks were hidden in smooth cold white. Long needle-pointed icicles hung from the wire fences and ice-covered pools of water crackled under-foot. At other times we might have sleet which came "swish" in rice-like showers and piled up, inches high, against the house and sheds and filled up all the hollows.

But today it was wind and rain. The cold wet macintosh flapped around my legs and my shoes were already half-full of water. Sloshing through trails of water I would peer hopefully towards the top gate which was now looming into view - but there was no sight of the cows. This meant that they could be anywhere over a wide wet area so in the poor visibility the dog and I would paddle down the paddocks, under leaden skies, and resume our search. Perhaps twenty minutes later, carefully hidden behind some saplings, the cows would be reluctantly found and it would take much barking and snapping by the dog to persuade them to come out into the full force of the rain. Eventually, most unwillingly, they would arrive at the milking-shed and the leader had to be forced into the bail.

Now, with cold stiff fingers, I roped one hind leg of the cow and tied it back to a corner post, so that with her other leg she couldn't -

1. stand on my foot; or
2. kick me, or
3. tip the bucket over; or
4. put her foot in the milk -

and sitting on my milking-stool the sound of squirt, squirt of milk into the empty bucket was added to that of the beating of rain on the leaky roof, the

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pouring of water into the tank and the splash of the overflow into grass-pools. One obstinate cow followed another until at last I was rewarded with three full buckets of milk. Then, after putting the milk in the dairy, I forked some hay to the cows, fed the dog and hurried into the warmth of the kitchen and commenced breakfast with boiling-hot Uncle Toby's oats with brown sugar and thick cream.

I was eight years old when my repeated requests to be allowed to milk a cow were at last heeded - and I must have given satisfaction for I was "allowed" to continue with that duty until the time of my marriage.

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In the 1970's it is probably very difficult for city people to realize the deep prejudice that used to be felt by many country folk towards the city - that den of iniquity from where a useless government imposed high taxes upon the poor struggling farmers in order that city-slickers, living in luxury, and too lazy to use their legs for walking, could be provided with a city-railway to carry them - and even a harbour bridge!

When my husband-to-be paid his first visit I was upset to find a rifle ready at the fireplace, although Mum assured me that it was ready in case a fox came prowling around the house. But when my visitor arrived he proved to be so ignorant about extremely simple matters, and the family felt so sorry for him, that all was well. They soon discovered that he couldn't harness a horse (ha-ha-ha) couldn't milk a cow (ho-ho-ho) and couldn't even guess the acreage of a crop of potatoes down in the bottom paddock. This was incredible and nearly caused the family to roll on the floor with laughter. After this it came as no surprise to anyone that when a pig escaped from the sty and got bogged in a dam, he didn't have a clue as to how to get it out - but seemed more concerned that he should not get his city clothes dirty

It was a year of drought and for miles along our road there were paddocks of dead corn. My visitor was puzzled to know why each visiting farmer asked the same question - "Have you seen Ernie Duncan's crop of corn?" - and why the question caused such loud laughter. The answer was that Ernie had been the first lad from the district to train at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College and now, with all his new-fangled knowledge, his crop of corn, instead of thriving and being lush and green, as one would expect, was just as dead as the rest of the corn in Armidale. And this fact caused everyone to brighten up considerably!

Although I now recall many incidents with amusement, I must acknowledge that when it came to things that really mattered, my parents were highly respected. They were highly regarded for their manner of living, their whole-hearted generosity and their willingness to give practical help to any in trouble. It was to my parents that neighbours turned in times of distress and invariably aid was forthcoming.

And how were we kids brought up? The "swish" of that whip-handle reinforced the constantly proclaimed family motto: 'Honesty is the best policy'. Any naughty words picked up at school were carefully washed from our mouths with common soap - and none of us ever got into any kind of trouble. With an abundance of good food and an inexhaustible supply of hard work, we grew up healthy and are (Just one moment until I consult my husband. "Yes" he says) all happily married.

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An occasional welcome diversion was a dance, usually arranged in the grainshed of one of my uncles. Here was a subject for discussion over the previous couple of weeks. Who would be going? What would we wear? With which boy would I go? What if he didn't ask me? What would we cook for the supper? and so the conversation went until, at last, the magic date arrived.

On ours and surrounding farms numerous horses would be harnessed to numerous sulkies and carts which, overloaded with excited people, were guided along rough roads and lanes which at other times were deserted. The date would invariably be that of a full moon, but if there was cloud, the long trip through the dark was a severe test for the driver and horse.

Overhead, flying foxes darted about apparently aimlessly but no doubt seeking the scent of ripe fruit in somebody's orchard. The hoot of an owl and the mournful cry of a curlew were background sounds which somehow matched the mysterious black shadows cast by the trunks of numerous trees as the light of the swaying hurricane-lamp hanging beneath the sulky went past. That light would reflect in gleaming eyes that stared back unblinkingly and sent chills down the spines of us kids. Although we knew quite well that those eyes belonged to rabbits, we preferred to think they were of ghostly monsters which crept through the dark - and it was a great comfort to be able to press a bit harder against Dad.

Clusters of sulky-lights and the lit-up window-squares of uncle's grainshed, were the signal that we had arrived. After tying the horse to the fence, in company with many others, and giving it the comfort of a nose-bag of chaff, we climbed the steps into the grainshed where groups of neighbours from miles around were arranging themselves comfortably, mostly on bags of corn or chaff. Many smaller children were settling down on rug-covered potato-bags placed here and there between piles of pumpkins and jam-melons, where they would soon sleep through the programme.

The grainshed, set high on piles so that vehicles and farm machinery could be sheltered beneath, resembled a dance-hall and was lit with hurricane lamps. Two fiddlers and a man with a concertina made 'tuning-up' sounds in anticipation of what was to follow. Here and there a wife was having difficulty in persuading her husband that he would be more comfortable if he removed his hat - and suddenly the musicians burst into a waltz. All joined in and it was a case of

Waltz me around again, Willie,  
Around and around and around,  
The music is dreamy, it's peaches and creamy,  
Oh! don't let my feet touch the ground.

Mazurka, Schottische, Barn-dance and the Quadrilles followed in quick succession until exhausted dancers at last sank on to their bags of chaff and relaxed. Someone who had just been waiting for this opportunity, volunteered to recite, and from memory rendered numerous verses of a mournful story of a beautiful lover who slowly dies through the final seven stanzas.

More dancing was interspersed with songs of the period, in the tear-jerking words of which nobody lives happily ever after but all die a lingering death - to quite melodious tunes. There was an enormous supper and all too soon it was 1 a.m. and after an enthusiastic rendering of "Auld Lang Syne" in which all joined, a procession of adults carrying sleeping children proceeded down the steps, climbed into their sulkies and carts and made their separate ways to home-sweet-home to enjoy a couple of hours sleep before it was time to milk the cows.



If our crop of wheat or oats miraculously escaped the various dangers laying in wait, it was, when ripe, harvested with a machine called a "reaper and binder" which was drawn through the crop by three horses. It cut the stalks a few inches above the ground and tied them, with twine, into bundles called "sheaves". The driver pushed a lever with his foot each time a half-dozen sheaves were formed and they would drop to the ground. After the crop had been cut, the sheaves were stood upright, in bundles of a dozen, in "stooks".

When the sheaves forming the stooks had dried, they would be forked up on a dray and taken to the hay-shed. If the shed was full, the balance were taken to a well-drained area and built into a stack. The making of a well-formed stack was a skilled job and there only a few men in the district who were regarded as being good stack-builders. When I was old enough, I was required to "turn the sheaves", i.e. stand on the dray and with a hay-fork, toss the sheaves to the stack builder, making them turn in the air so they landed with their heads towards the centre of the stack.

When the time came to thresh the crops throughout the district, it became a very busy time for my father. He possessed a huge threshing-machine - about twenty-five feet long and eight feet high - which was drawn from farm to farm by a team of twelve bullocks.

The machine was driven by a steam-engine, about the size of an old-fashioned steam-roller, which was connected to it by a long leather belt. The engine was drawn along the road by another team of ten bullocks. Before the arrival of the threshing machine and engine, the farmer would need to arrange for the voluntary services of about twenty neighbours whom he would help when their turn came. He would also need to have a supply of wood -fuel for the engine and empty bags to receive the grain.

When the machine and engine had arrived, and had been lined up - and the fire lit to raise steam - the men would decide on the allocation of duties. One man took charge of the machine and constantly oiled the moving parts. My father and an assistant would be in charge of the engine and attend to its oiling and the supply of water and fuel, while a man with a horse-drawn sled brought water from a dam. Men on the hay-shed or stack tossed sheaves to a platform high up on the machine where two men were working. One cut the binding-twine and the other fed the opened sheaves into the machine where they were drawn around by a belt and the grain threshed from the heads. Up to six men were required to cope with the enormous quantity of straw being ejected by the machine and convert it into a large hay-stack.

Two empty bags were attached to the machine and a flow of grain poured out of a spout into one of them which was filled in about one minute. The spout was then directed into the other bag and the filled one replaced with an empty one. The filled bags were passed to other workers who, with long curved needles, threaded with twine, neatly sewed up the mouths. Two other men then loaded the filled bags on to a dray and took them to the safety of a weather-proof shed.

This was the scene out in the paddock, but inside the farmhouse was also a place of activity as preparations were made for morning and afternoon tea and also lunch for an extra twenty hungry men. Scones, damper, biscuits, cakes, were all required, and also, for example, corned beef and vegetables had to be prepared and cooked. And, of course, there would be tea by the gallon. If the farmer had no daughters, women from neighbouring farms helped with the preparations and washing-up. On our farm, two willing(?) daughters helped Mum.

This annual gathering of so many people also served as a social occasion. The population was thinly scattered over a wide area and some never saw each other from one threshing season until the next. News of births, deaths and marriages and conditions of crops were swapped around and then would come the time for authentic tales, such as "I remember the time when old Bluey O'Connor tried that new-fangled American fertilizer on his pumpkins and used too much. His crop was enormous. There were thousands of giant pumpkins growing larger and larger. The trouble was the vines grew so fast they dragged the pumpkins all over the paddocks and wore them out".

As time passed, and the farms became mechanised, bullocks and horses gradually disappeared and the large exchange of voluntary labour ceased. Consequently, visiting between farmers became less frequent and there was a big change in their social life. In a former period I can remember a space of three years when my father never went to town, except to vote. But I recollect that on a Sunday morning up to sixteen neighbouring farmers visited our home and my mother, without, of course, making any charge, cut their hair. Then they stayed for lunch and probably for afternoon tea. The meals were prepared by my sister and me - and who do you think washed-up?

Thus, as occasions like this were constantly repeated, we knew all the farmers living for miles around. Without the slightest thought or hesitation, we climbed straight through their fences (just as they did with ours) to take short cuts to other farms or to collect mushrooms or blackberries - or to shoot rabbits. I clearly recollect the surprise we all received when a brother was passing across a farm which had just been purchased by a stranger who remonstrated with him. My brother, amazed, asked what harm he was doing. The new farmer couldn't think of an answer at first, then said "You're walking on my grass and wearing it out. Keep off my farm!" And so, gradually, more farms passed into the hands of strangers with similar views - who consequently remained strangers. And the old way of life slowly changed.

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When, in 1926, I was married in the Armidale Presbyterian Church, I was asked what advice I could leave for the benefit of other daughters of farmers. In the light of my own experience I could only advise "Don't be born until you have two older brothers to do the men's work" And, leaving seven brothers to learn how to clean their own boots, off I went to live at Carlton with thousands of happy memories of my childhood "down on the farm".

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